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## BOOK REVIEWS.

DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION. By John Dewey. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916. Pp. xii, 434.

The thinking world has long since learned to expect from Professor Dewey matters of prime importance. Of the general significance of this volume it is perhaps enough to say that, in the reviewer's opinion, it is the most important of Professor Dewey's productions thus far. In defiance of possible imputations of chauvinism, the reviewer will also say that it would be difficult to overstate its import and value for all students of education, philosophy, and society.

The sub-title of the volume is "An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education." Most books that have appeared under that caption have left recollections either of an external, mechanical application to education of a philosophy fashioned for other purposes; or of a conception of the philosophy of education in which the philosophical element is regarded as a particular 'part' or 'phase' or 'kind' of philosophy concerned with the particular problems of education. But the thesis of this volume is that all philosophy is, at bottom, social philosophy; and all social philosophy is the philosophy of education. Hence the significant, not to say startling, statement: "The most penetrating definition of philosophy which can be given is that it is the theory of education, in its most general phase."

William James was fond of quoting Chesterton's statement, "The most important thing about a man is his philosophy." It may be added that the most important thing about a man's philosophy is its conception of philosophy—its opinion of itself, of its origin, and its mission. A philosophy, therefore, which believes that the 'most penetrating' definition of itself identifies it with the philosophy of education and in the end with the philosophy of democracy is something that demands attention. There is no doubt of the 'penetrating' character of this definition. It quickly penetrates all conceptions of philosophy which find its origin in a 'pure reason' or a pure 'sentience' that by some inexplicable cosmic accident or 'fall' is in but not of our human world; and it penetrates all theories of education which are a

*priori* deductions from ready made systems of such philosophy. In this brief notice only the main headlands of the argument can be pointed out.

In the face of the 'ineluctable fact' of the death of its individuals, life in all its phases and contents has to perpetuate and develop itself by transmission, by communication. It must then to some extent be social in character. And the more complex the life-bearing being, the more communicatory, the more social it is obliged to become. This social process of transmission by which life maintains and develops itself is education. Education is then no mere 'auxiliary,' it is literally a matter of life or death.

The point at which ideas, the capacity for reflection, appear in this process marks a great epoch in its development. It means the inestimable power of remembered successes and failures, and the capacity for utilizing them in future operations. And with a little further development, it means a theory of education, a deliberately planned inquiry and experimentation. Here is the point at which philosophy gets its identity with the theory of education, and at which the whole method of Professor Dewey's treatment appears. If we take seriously the view that ideas, theories, have their origin in and their operations determined by this process of perpetuating life through education, philosophical ideas and theories can be no exception. But, if this were all, it could be said: "Neither can any other ideas be excepted; and if all ideas are 'educational' the meaning of the term 'educational' becomes too diffused and thin to be useful." Professor Dewey's exposition goes on to show (1) how in point of content, philosophical problems, like the problems of education, are more directly concerned with active 'attitudes' and 'dispositions' than are the sciences which deal with specific fields of nature and society; and (2) how, historically, 'the fact that the stream of European philosophical thought arose as a theory of educational procedure, remains an eloquent witness to the intimate connection of philosophy and education.'

But all this is 'instrumental' to the matter which Professor Dewey has particularly at heart in this volume, and indeed everywhere,—namely, 'the implications of democracy in human association' and therefore, as we have seen, in education and philosophy. "In all social life whatever, even in a gang of thieves, we find (1) interests held in common and (2) interaction and co-operation with other groups." "How numerous and varied are

the interests which are commonly shared? How full and free is the interplay with other forms of association?"—these are the test questions for every society; and they both point to democracy. The first means 'not only a mutual sharing of interests but a reliance upon the recognition of these mutual interests as the chief factor in social control.' The second demands 'not only free interaction between social groups but the continuous readjustment of social habits in meeting the new situation produced by varied intercourse.'

With inexorable continuity the pedigree of the 'problems' of government, of education, and of philosophy is traced back to the disjunctions and conflicts due to the failure to recognise both these 'criteria of human association.' When the social, human aim of education is prostituted to exclusive, aggressive national interests, division, confusion, and strife enter. "Art, science, and commerce are international both in quality and method. But with national sovereignty regarded as the basic conception and motive of government each nation lives in a state of hostility and incipient or actual war with its neighbors." The antitheses of educational aims, of subject matter and methods; the problems of 'interest and discipline,' of 'efficiency and culture,' of 'labor and leisure,' of 'naturalism and humanism,' are all shown, with convincing detail, to be symptoms of social cleavage. To the same source are traced the issues of philosophy. The problems of 'mind and matter,' of 'body and soul,' of 'the world and the individual,' of 'knowledge and practise,' of 'truth and goodness,'—all these 'record the main lineaments and difficulties of contemporary social practice.'

Within the present generation we have seen departments and schools of education grow shy of the 'philosophy of education.' There are schools of education that even boast the absence from the curriculum of any such thing as 'the philosophy of education.' The reason is not far to seek. When 'the philosophy of education' consists, as it so often does, of the antinomies of transcendental metaphysics, translated into educational terms, thus tending to fix in education the very disjunctions it should heal, or when it consists, on the other hand, of a collection of theorems and rules—a sort of pedagogical Euclid, little wonder departments of education feel they can get on without it. But if the conception of 'the philosophy of education' be one in which 'the most penetrating definition' of the philosophy in it is that it is

'the theory of education in its most general phases' and one in which the theory of education is conceived as an account of the actual operations whereby human society is perpetuated in the world then no department or school of education which pretends to touch bottom can ignore it. The attempt to do so is quite analogous to the attempt of a well known school of philosophy to construct a new logic which excludes the act of knowing, because, forsooth, the act of knowing has been regarded in the past as 'subjective' and has kept logic in the throes of epistemology. As logic has been in need of a different conception of the act of knowing, so the philosophy of education has been in need of a new conception of philosophy. This need "Democracy and Education" supplies. The sub-title of this volume might well be "The Restoration of the Philosophy of Education"—its restoration—not only to students of departments and schools of education—but to all who have any interest in the problems of our common life and in the future of democracy in our world.

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THE UNITY OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION. Essays arranged and edited by F. S. Marvin (Author of 'The Living Past'). Oxford University Press, 1915. Pp. 315.

A brave, large-minded book has been published under this title. The title itself is a *beau geste*, calling us to hope and to sympathize, reminding us, in the closing words of a fine essay, that the great forces which make for unity "will reappear after the storm has passed and rebuild the wreck" (p. 312). Though the different writers agree in thinking that "our country's cause and the cause of our Allies is just," there is not one bitter word about Germany from beginning to end. "To curb aggressive nationalism," it is well said, "is the root-problem of the present war. To reconcile permanently nationalism with humanity would be to establish the everlasting peace" (p. 20). And "No peace can . . . be permanent which contemplates the excommunication of a leading member of the human family" (p. 305). The last sentence like many in this book, supplies a much-needed corrective to those (in every country) who think their only task is "to curb the aggressive nationalism" of all countries except their own. The writers will not despair. *Wir heissen*